

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT  
OF COLUMBIA BUDGET AUTON-  
OMY ACT OF 2013

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Tuesday, January 22, 2013*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, District of Columbia residents raise billions of dollars annually for their local budget, and, like Americans everywhere, regard the right to control the funds they themselves raise to support their city as fundamental to their American citizenship. Therefore, today I introduce the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act of 2013, the second bill I have introduced this Congress, to allow the District's local-taxpayer-raised budget to take effect immediately when passed by the city, without being subject to congressional approval.

Control over the dollars raised by local taxpayers is central to local control, the oldest American government principle. Beyond this core principle, permitting the city's local budget to become law without congressional approval would have multiple practical benefits for both the city and Congress. For the city, a timely budget means eliminating the uncertainty of the congressional approval process, which has a negative effect on the city's bond rating, adding unnecessary interest costs for local taxpayers; significantly improving the District's ability to make accurate revenue forecasts; and reducing the countless operational problems that result because the city's budget cannot be implemented until Congress approves it. Also of major importance is that the bill would allow the District to use the typical state and local government fiscal year (July 1–June 30), allowing ample time to prepare for the opening of schools in September, instead of the federal fiscal year (October 1–September 30). Moreover, the D.C. local budget consumes valuable subcommittee, committee, and floor time in both houses of Congress, the most inefficient and redundant annual process in the Congress, yet the D.C. budget is of interest only to those members who use it to promote their own issues, violating a principle of local self-government that they value for their own districts and states.

Increasing recognition of the hardships and delays caused by the congressional approval process has led Congress to begin freeing the city from many congressional constraints. I appreciate that my bill to avoid a D.C. government shutdown when the federal government shuts down is in the Senate Appropriations Committee-passed fiscal year 2013 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill. President Obama included this provision in his fiscal year 2013 budget, and the Republican-controlled House Appropriations Committee indicated in its report accompanying its fiscal year 2013 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill that legislation to avoid D.C. shutdowns was necessary. In addition, several years ago, I negotiated an agreement with a Republican-

led appropriations committee that ensures that the city's local budget is approved in the first continuing resolution (CR) if the D.C. Appropriations bill has not been approved by the start of the fiscal year. This approach ended the annual nightmares of lengthy delay of the budget of a big city until an appropriations bill was passed, often months after the start of the fiscal year. As a result, under CRs, the city has been able to spend its local funds at the next year's funding level, even though federal agencies must spend at the prior year's funding level. We are appreciative that this process, which eliminated serious problems for the functioning of the D.C. government, has continued.

We nearly secured budget autonomy for the District in the last days of the lame-duck session in the 111th Congress. I used an unusual procedure, getting the House authorizers to agree to the inclusion of budget autonomy in the fiscal year 2011 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill, which was passed by the subcommittee. Unfortunately, Congress passed a CR instead of regular appropriations bills in the lame duck.

Most important, we gained critical support for D.C. budget autonomy in the 112th Congress. In an Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing in May 2011, Chairman DARRELL ISSA (R-CA) endorsed budget autonomy. Since that time, House Majority Leader ERIC CANTOR (R-VA) and Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell (R) have both indicated their support for budget autonomy.

Even if the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act of 2013 were enacted, Congress would still retain jurisdiction over the District of Columbia under article I, section 8, clause 17 of the U.S. Constitution. Because this authority allows Congress to make changes to the District's budget and other laws at any time, it is unnecessary to require a lengthy repetition of the District's local budget process in Congress. The time is overdue to permit the city to enact its local budget, the single most important step Congress could take to help the District better manage itself.

Members of Congress were sent here to do the business of the nation. Members have no reason to be interested in or to become knowledgeable about the local budget of a single city. In the past, the House and Senate have more often than not passed the District's budget as is. Our bill takes the Congress in the direction it is already moving in. Congressional interference in one of the most vital rights of self-government should end this year by enacting the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act of 2013.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ**

OF PENNSYLVANIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Tuesday, January 22, 2013*

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 9, on final passage of H.R. 152, "Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013" I am not re-

corded because I was absent due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Tuesday, January 22, 2013*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, January 14, 2013, I was unable to be present for recorded votes. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall vote No. 8 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 219), "yes" on rollcall vote No. 9 (on approving the journal), "no" on rollcall vote No. 10 (on the motion to adjourn).

HONORING THE HONOREES OF THE  
PANTHEON-BOURGEOIS GUITARS

**HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD**

OF MAINE  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Tuesday, January 22, 2013*

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Pantheon-Bourgeois Guitars, LLC on winning the first annual Achievement Award from the Small Enterprise Growth Fund (SEGO).

Pantheon-Bourgeois Guitars was formed in 2000 after Dana Bourgeois, a well known luthier, and a group of new business investors collaborated over a shared vision. In just over 12 years, the company has built a reputation among professional musicians for being among the finest crafted acoustic guitars in the world. Today, Dana and his craftsmen build about thirty guitars every month in the historic Roy Continental Mill in Lewiston, Maine.

Pantheon-Bourgeois Guitars was recently honored by SEGF with its first annual Achievement Award, which recognizes the company's tremendous revenue growth and exceptional productivity in the past year. This award follows a fruitful collaboration with Maine's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), which provides business and technical assistance to help our state's small businesses thrive. With the help of Maine MEP, Pantheon-Bourgeois Guitars expanded its weekly production by 50 percent. The company has additional plans to implement improvements that will boost future productivity and efficiency.

A professionally-managed venture capital fund, the SEGF has been investing only in Maine companies who exhibit the potential for growth and public benefit since 1997. This well deserved award solidifies Pantheon-Bourgeois Guitars as valued member of Maine's business community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me again in congratulating Pantheon-Bourgeois Guitars on earning SEGF's Achievement Award.